

Message Text

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ACTION ST-01

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FM AMEMBASSY TUNIS

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INFO AMEMBASSY ROME

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E.O.: 11652: N/A

TAGS: ATRN, TU

SUBJ: AIR TRAVEL - REQUEST FOR EXCEPTION TO NEAREST
PRACTICABLE INTERCHANGE POINT

REF : 75 STATE A-7187

1. UNTIL REF AIRGRAM WAS ISSUED THE POST HAD BEEN USING PARIS, LONDON, FRANKFURT OR ROME AS INTERCHANGE POINTS TO CONNECT WITH AN AMERICAN-FLAG AIRLINE. UNDER CURRENT REGULATIONS THE LEAST COSTLY INTERCHANGE POINT FOR TUNIS ACCORDING TO THE DEPARTMENT IS ROME. HOWEVER, THE POST WOULD LIKE TO POINT OUT SOME OF THE DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED WITH USING ROME/FIUMICINO AIRPORT.

2. FOR SOME TIME THE SITUATION AT ROME/FIUMICINO AIRPORT HAS BEEN CHAOTIC. LOST BAGGAGE, WORK SLOW-DOWNS, CANCELED FLIGHTS AND STRIKES CALLED WITH LITTLE OR NO WARNING HAVE BEEN COMMONPLACE. THESE DIFFICULTIES, WHICH HAVE PLAGUED TRAVELERS TRANSITING ROME FOR SOME TIME, ARE BECOMING MORE AND MORE FREQUENT.

3. THESE DISRUPTIONS POSE MORE THAN JUST PERSONAL INCONVENIENCES. THEY CAUSE DELAYS IN TRAVEL AND SOMETIMES EXTRA COST TO EITHER THE TRAVELER OR THE U.S. GOVERNMENT, I.E., RECENTLY THE POST HAD TWO TRAVELERS TRAVELING FROM ROME TO TUNIS WHO WERE HALFWAY (IN THE AIR) BETWEEN ROME AND TUNIS WHEN ALITALIA CALLED A STRIKE. THE PLANE PROCEEDED TO RETURN

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TO ROME WHERE THE TRAVELERS HAD TO WAIT SEVERAL HOURS BEFORE

OBTAINING SEATS ON A SPECIAL TUNIS AIR FLIGHT TO TUNIS.

YET ANOTHER EXAMPLE WAS THE CASE OF A DEPENDENT TRAVELING TO BOSTON JANUARY 7 ON U.S. GOVERNMENT TRAVEL ORDERS. UPON ARRIVING AT FIUMICINO, WITH A CONFIRMED ONWARD FLIGHT TO BOSTON, TWA 811, THE TRAVELER WAS ADVISED HIS FLIGHT HAD BEEN CANCELED DUE TO A FIREMEN'S STRIKE. AFTER WAITING OVERNIGHT THE TRAVELER WAS RESCHEDULED THROUGH NEW YORK CITY, NECESSITATING ANOTHER OVERNIGHT STOP (IN NEW YORK) WITH ADDITIONAL COSTS INVOLVED FOR HOTELS AND ADDITIONAL AIRFARE.

4. THE ABOVE EXAMPLES ARE JUST TWO OF MANY SUCH PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED IN USING ROME/FIUMICINO AIRPORT AS THE POST'S NEAREST PRACTICABLE INTERCHANGE POINT. DIFFICULTIES SUCH AS THESE WOULD SEEM JUSTIFICATION FOR USING THE NEXT NEAREST INTERCHANGE POINT (PARIS, AT A DIFFERENCE IN RECEIPTS TO AN AMERICAN CARRIER OF \$71.70) TO CONNECT WITH AMERICAN-FLAG SERVICE.

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